



CALIFORNIA LABOR NEWS

July 2005

FROM ASSEMBLYMEMBER PAUL KORETZ
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AEROSPACE JANITORS ON STRIKE -- KORETZ HANDS OUT GROCERIES TO STRIKING WORKERS

Janitors who work in the aerospace industry walked off their jobs on July 6th, one day after negotiators held an all-night session and failed to reach an agreement. The strike was called when cleaning companies at Boeing, Raytheon, and Northrop Grumman began engaging in intimidation tactics to keep janitors quiet about poverty conditions.

These janitors have spent months fighting to reach the standards of the surrounding Los Angeles area, where their counterparts in other industries are paid \$2 to \$4 more per hour and have full family health care. Currently, the roughly seven hundred aerospace and defense industry janitors take home about \$1,000 per month and receive no employer-provided health coverage or paid sick time. Instead, many janitors use tax-payer funded services for basic healthcare.



Assemblyman Koretz handing out a bag full of groceries to a striking janitor



Koretz joins Congressman Brad Sherman and SEIU 1877 President Mike Garcia in support of striking janitors

What is particularly concerning to me is that the aerospace and defense industries make millions from taxpayer-funded Department of Defense contracts, but then turn around and force California taxpayers to shoulder the cost of health care by not ensuring janitors have affordable health insurance.

At a union-sponsored rally on July 8, I was delighted to hand out groceries to striking workers to assist their families during their hardship. Janitors at Boeing, Raytheon, and Northrop Grumman already live in poverty without health care. I want to make sure that no family goes hungry during this strike.

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Budget Restores IHSS Wages/Labor Center Funding Up In The Air

Despite efforts by the Governor, the recently passed budget restores wages for our important In Home Support Service (IHSS) workers. The Governor's original proposed budget would have slashed the state's share of IHSS wages to the state minimum wage of \$6.75 an hour.

Our IHSS workers are some of our most dedicated public servants, performing vital services for our elderly and disabled family members, friends and neighbors. Moreover, the Governor's proposal to cut wages would have driven workers from the system, forcing patients into state-run facilities and driving costs through the roof. Making such an inhumane cut that would have actually increased state costs made absolutely no sense.

Also, Governor Schwarzenegger has used his blue pencil to veto continued funding for the UC Labor Research Center, an entity dedicated to helping policymakers better understand the needs of California's workforce. The effect of this \$3.8 million cut is to eliminate funding for the only part of the 10-campus UC system devoted to studying the key issues of labor and employment facing California's working families. This action was taken despite his promise made to Speaker Nunez not to veto the funding! I've heard from several sources that the Governor now promises to reinstate this funding. I'll believe it when I see it.

I made these issues my two highest budget priorities and only voted for the budget once both of these cuts were eliminated.

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IMPORTANT LABOR BILLS FOR WORKING FAMILIES PENDING IN LEGISLATURE

Despite the fact that the current occupant of the Governor's office is not exactly labor-friendly, it is important that we continue to work aggressively and proactively to fight for California's working families. The following measures are currently moving through the Legislature and hopefully will be on the Governor's desk in the near future. As Chair of the Assembly Committee on Labor and Employment, I am proud to have supported each of the following bills as they came through Committee:

[AB 48 \(Lieber\)](#) – Increases the state minimum wage and indexes it to the cost of inflation.

[AB 51 \(Koretz\)](#) – Imposes minimal graduation requirements on our state-funded apprenticeship programs to ensure accountability and eliminate fraud.

[AB 169 \(Oropeza\)](#) – Increases penalties for employers who discriminate against employees in pay on the basis of gender.

[AB 391 \(Koretz\)](#) – Provides unemployment insurance benefits to workers who are ready, willing and able to work but have been locked out through no fault of their own.

[AB 755 \(De La Torre\)](#) – Ensures that piece rate workers are provided rest periods.

[AB 805 \(Chu\)](#) – Increases protections for workers and help employers to recognize and prevent heat illness.

[AB 875 \(Koretz\)](#) – Strengthens enforcement in the underground economy by coordinating efforts of our labor law and tax enforcement entities.

[AB 1184 \(Koretz\)](#) – Prohibits mandatory overtime for nurses in our state facilities.

[AB 1310 \(Nunez\)](#) – Requires large employers that pressure workers to retire early to provide workers with sufficient information to make an informed decision.

[SB 300 \(Kuehl\)](#) – Strengthens and expands current state law concerning family and medical leave.

[SB 363 \(Perata\)](#) – Requires hospitals to adopt "zero lift" policies for patient transfers rather than forcing nurses to transfer patients by themselves.

[SB 848 \(Dunn\)](#) – Helps our struggling port truck drivers by authorizing them to organize collectively.

ALRB ISSUES COMPLAINT AGAINST UFW ON SAME DAY GALLO BOYCOTT IS ANNOUNCED – COINCIDENCE? I THINK NOT!

Many of you have followed with interest the long-standing labor dispute between the United Farm Workers (UFW) and Gallo of Sonoma. Unfortunately, recent actions by the General Counsel of the Agriculture Labor Relations Board (ALRB) raise serious concerns about how the agency is administering the law.

After months and months of no progress, UFW announced on June 14 that it was initiating a boycott of Gallo wine. That same day, the ALRB General Counsel announced that, after months of investigation, it was issuing a complaint against UFW for failure to bargain in good faith.

It is highly suspicious that, after months of investigation, the ALRB would announce its decision on the same day that UFW planned to announce its boycott of Gallo. Nevertheless, ALRB General Counsel Norma Turner insisted that the timing of the issuance of the complaint was purely a "coincidence."

I don't buy it. It appears that the issuance of the complaint was specifically and strategically timed to dampen any effect of UFW's announcement of the boycott. Moreover, evidence shows that Gallo company representatives had advance notice of the complaint – before it had even been served on UFW! Senator Richard Alarcon and I wrote to ALRB General Counsel demanding that she explain her actions in this matter. We are also exploring the idea of conducting a joint Senate and Assembly hearing into this very troubling development.

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Unlike aerospace and defense companies, other Los Angeles area client corporations are at the bargaining table with their cleaning contractors and their outsourced janitors. These businesses recognize their responsibility to ensure that there is not a revolving door at the cleaning companies with which they contract.

Though Boeing, Raytheon, and Northrop Grumman are not the janitors' direct employers, they hold significant influence over their subcontractors and can help bring this strike to an end.



Aerospace janitors on strike in El Segundo during a rally on July 8.